Mr. *BARTON*'s

FAST-SERMON

BEFORE THE

Lord Mayor, and Court of Aldermen,

JULY 16th. 1690.

Pilkington Mayor.

Jovis xvii die Julii 1690. *Annoq; Regni Regis & Reginæ Willielmi & Mariæ Angliæ, &c. Secundo.*

THIS Court doth desire Mr. *Barton* to Print his Sermon Preached on the 16th. of this Instant *July*, at St. *Mary le Bow*, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen.

per Cur. Aldr.

7

A

SERMON

Preached at St. *Mary le Bow*

BEFORE THE

Right HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Mayor

And COURT of

ALDERMEN,

ON

Wedneſday the 16th. of *July*,

BEING THE

FAST DAY.

By *SAMUEL BARTON*, B. D.

LONDON,

Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the *Three Pidgeons* over-againſt the Royal *Exchange* in *Cornhil*, 1690.

The Epiſtle Dedicatory.

To the Right Honourable

Sir *THOMAS PILKINGTON*,

Lord MAYOR of the City of

LONDON.

My Lord,

WHen I Preach'd this Sermon at your Invitation before your Lordſhip and the Court of Aldermen, whatever fault was in it was imputable wholly to my ſelf: But now that I Publiſh it by your Lordſhips and their Order, you will pardon me if I tell you, you have made your ſelves ſharers in the Blame. Yet I muſt needs ſay, had I bin convinc'd there was any thing in it that juſtly deſerv'd Cenſure, I ſhould not eaſily have bin prevail'd with to expoſe it to Publick view, unalter'd as it is. But ſuch is my Unhappineſs, that though I have bin told that many were offended at it, yet I have not met with any one that knew a good Reaſon why, or that was himſelf perſwaded there was any Reaſon for it. The onely Paſſage I have heard of (tho' there may be many more for ought I know) that gave ſo much Offence, is that toward the Concluſion wherein I expreſs my deteſtation of ſuch a Wickedneſs as the inviting in the French *would be, in an* Engliſh-man *and a Proteſtant. I am not yet perſwaded that the declaring my Abhorrence*

horrence of it in the manner that I have done, is ſo much as a tacit accuſing any Perſon of it: Neither can I think that I have aggravated the Crime in an undue manner, when I make it next to the worſt that can be imagin'd. But if any one will tell me of a greater that ought to come between, I ſhall not be backward to acknowledge ſuch a Miſtake. Neither laſtly, can I think it worth my while to anſwer ſuch a weak and peeviſh Objection as ſome I hear have made, as if it were Blaſphemy forſooth to ſuppoſe that wicked men may account the Government of Almighty God a Tyranny. And yet if nothing of all this be the Fault that is to be found in that Expreſſion, I muſt needs ſay, I am yet to ſeek where it lyes. In compoſing of the Sermon it was my real deſire to promote as well as I could the great End for which the Day was ſet apart, viz. Repentance and Reformation whereby the Judgments of God might be prevented. And I am not out of hope that it may have had, and may yet have by virtue of this Publication, ſome little Effect that way. And therefore I humbly preſent it to your Lordſhip as a Teſtimony that I am

My Lord,

Your Lordſhips moſt Obedient and
Humble Servant,

SAMUEL BARTON.

AMOS

AMOS IV. 12.

Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael; And becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Iſrael.

IT is an eaſie matter eſpecially out of the Prophetical books of Scripture to chooſe out a Text proper enough to the occaſion of our preſent meeting. For the people of the *Jews* (in whoſe place and ſtead the Chriſtian Church, and at this time the Reformed part thereof do's ſucceed) had, in their latter time eſpecially, before they were carried into Captivity, and before God would execute the ſevereſt of his Judgments upon them for their Apoſtacies, many Prophets ſent unto them to warn them, whoſe Writings, and the Meſſages that they deliver'd, it has pleas'd God ſhould be convey'd down to us, to the intent that from thence we might learn to take warning alſo, and to underſtand the Methods of Gods dealing, and the Diſcipline we muſt expect he ſhould exerciſe toward thoſe whom he favours with

with the knowledge of his Will, when they behave themſelves unthankfully and unworthily toward him. We have the Hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, to let us know what befell the People of God in thoſe early Ages of the World, and how he chaſtiz'd them for their Offences, and deliver'd them oft-times upon their Repentance. And we have the very words of the Prophets whom God ſent among them (many times very pungent and penetrating words, ſuch as carry a more than ordinary force and ſpirit in them) very applicable in many inſtances, to our own condition. Theſe things were written for our Example and Admonition. And indeed, ſetting aſide the *Divine Authority*, there is no other Book in the whole World containing ſo many wholeſome and uſeful Inſtructions, ſuch Comforts and Supports in the time of Adverſity, nor ſuch neceſſary Directions, and uſeful Cautions for all times, as are to be found in Holy Scripture.

But though the Scripture abound, as I ſaid, with Directions very uſeful and applicable to every emergency, and to every ſtate and condition we can be in, and particularly have many

many Texts proper enough to a day of Humiliation (as this is) of which number I take this which I have read to you, to be one. And though it be not difficult, either to explain the meaning of it, or to make ſuch Obſervations and Inferences from it, as may be very uſeful to every one of us; yet how to preſs theſe things ſo home, and to ſpeak with ſuch force and cogency, as the preſent time and ſtate of things does require, and as may cauſe ſuch neceſſary Truths to ſink deep into every one of our minds, is I confeſs a work that ſeems too difficult for me. However with Gods Aſſiſtance I ſhall apply my ſelf to it in the beſt manner that I can.

Theſe words then (to begin with an Explanation of them) are a plain Declaration of Gods intention to proceed in executing Judgments on his People, and chaſtiſing them ſeverely for their ſins. For the Prophet in the Verſes before had bin recounting to them what Judgments God had already ſent upon them for their Wickedneſs, and that without any good effect. He begins this Enumeration at the *6th. ver.* telling them of a Famine that had bin amongſt them. *I have given you cleanneſs of teeth in all your Cities, and want of bread in all your*

 places,

places, yet have you not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord. That Chaſtiſement, it ſeems, had done them little good. He therefore adds farther at the 7. and 8. *verſes, And alſo I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harveſt,* and this was in ſuch a manner as did plainly ſhew the finger of God in it; for it follows, *and I cauſed it to rain upon one City, and cauſed it not to rain upon another city, one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereon it rained not withered; ſo two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but they were not ſatisfied; yet have ye not returned unto me ſaith the Lord.* Still they amended not their ways, nor would forſake their ſins, though the ſtrange difference that was made between ſome places and others in the Execution of this Judgment, made it evident that the hand of God was in it. It follows at the 9th. *verſe. I have ſmitten you with blaſting and mildew, when your Gardens, and your Vineyards and your Fig-trees, and your Olive-Trees increaſed, the Palmer-worm devoured them; yet have ye not returned unto me ſaith the Lord.* That is ſtill the Burthen, and the complaint of God againſt his people, that nothing of all this would awaken them ſo far as to make them return to their Duty. Therefore he proceeds

at the 10th. *verſe* to mind them of yet heavier Judgments that had bin executed upon them. *I have ſent among you the Peſtilence after the manner of Egypt, your young men have I ſlain with the ſword, and have taken away your horſes, and I have made the ſtink of your camps to come up into your noſtrils; Yet have ye not returned unto me ſaith the Lord.* Here is ſtill the ſame complaint entered againſt them, that all this had not wrought a Reformation. Yea ſtill farther at the 11th. *ver. I have overthrown ſome of you as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a Fire-brand plucked out of the burning; yet have ye not returned unto me ſaith the Lord.* This was a dreadful aggravation of their wickedneſs, that all this would work no good effect upon them, nor bring them to a Reformation, but like thoſe mentioned in the 9th. of the *Revelations* at the ſounding of the Sixth Trumpet which brought ſuch diſmal Judgments upon the World, yet they, *the reſt of the men*, 'tis ſaid, *which were not killed by theſe Plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands.* One might expect upon this Inſtance of the *Jewes* Incorrigibleneſs, that God ſhould either have totally cut them off and deſtroyed them, or elſe that he ſhould at leaſt have given them over, and no longer own'd

them as his People. But he was more merciful than ſo; and therefore ſends them a farther Summons by the Prophet to try if at laſt their ſtout hearts would yield, or whether they would reſolve to abide the worſt of it; and that in the words of my Text, *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael; And becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Iſrael.* In which words you ſee God ſtill ſpeaks to them as his People, and own himſelf to be their God. But he threatens them ſeverely in the former part of the words. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee. Therefore*, becauſe thou haſt hitherto ſhewed thy ſelf ſo incorrigible, I will try if I can overcome thy ſtubbornneſs; *thus* will I do unto thee; ſome refer the particle *thus* back to what is ſaid at the ſecond *verſe* where the Prophet tells them, that *God had ſworn by his holineſs, that lo the days ſhould come upon them, that he would take them away with hooks, and their Poſterity with Fiſh-hooks, i. e.* cauſe them to be carried into Captivity as eaſily as men take little Fiſhes. Others underſtand it more generally, and that ſeems better then to look back ſo far, *thus will I do unto thee*, i. e. I will proceed and ſtill multiply Judgments upon thee, whilſt thou continueſt in this manner impenitent. And then it follows

lows very ſeaſonably after ſuch a Threatning; *And becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Iſrael.* Which words, ſome underſtand as ſpoken ironically; as if he ſhould have ſaid, ſince thou ſeem'ſt reſolv'd thus to contend with me, and to defeat all my deſigns in chaſtizing thee, prepare thy ſelf and try whether thou art able to ſtand againſt me, whether thou canſt divert the ſtrokes of my Indignation, or how well thou canſt bear them when they come upon thee. This is no ill ſence of the words, for God might thus by his Prophet upbraid his People with their weakneſs and folly, that would act as if they thought themſelves able to encounter him, or had no need to fear the effects of his diſpleaſure: And the following words at the laſt Verſe of this Chapter ſeem to favour this ſence, as expreſſing and ſetting forth the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God, and the irreſiſtibility of his Power. *For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkneſs, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord the God of Hoſts is his name.* But others, and I think the greateſt part of Interpreters, chooſe rather to underſtand it in ſomewhat a milder ſence, as an Exhortation

to

to Repentance, by which possibly the wrath of God might yet be appeas'd, and his Judgments averted, or at least if not so, if the Decree were peremptorily and irreversibly gone out against them, yet they might be the better able to submit to the stroke, and bear with patience and fortitude the evil that was coming upon them. For were there no more in it than so, it is a very useful and necessary warning. When Troubles are a coming 'tis very good to be well prepar'd. Yet that Repentance would still have prevented the Evil that was threatned, seems very probable as for other Reasons, so because of that saying which you have twice repeated in the beginning of the next Chapter, *Seek the Lord and ye shall live.* I therefore look on the former part of the words as a Threatning, and the latter as an Exhortation to Repentance, whereby the Threatned Evil might be prevented; yet not so as to exclude either of the other sences, wherein they may be taken to denote the impotence and utter inability of men to resist or fight against God, or the need of a prepar'd mind when Evil is certainly a-coming. Accordingly therefore from the words thus open'd we may draw these following Observations.

1. *That*

1. *That 'tis the incorrigibleneſs of a People under former and leſſer Judgments, that cauſes Almighty God to ſend more and greater.* *Therefore* thus will I do unto thee. Becauſe thou haſt not yet return'd unto me and amended thy ways, I will proceed to farther degrees of ſeverity toward thee.

2. *That when Judgment is going forth againſt a People they have no other help or remedy but a true Repentance.* They may prepare to meet their God with a humble Submiſſion and Acknowledgement of their Fault, and ſo perhaps may avert his Anger, but there is no other poſſible way of doing it, no Force nor Policy, without that, will put by the ſtroke.

3. *That though Judgments be never ſo peremptorily denounc'd, yet ſtill there is a door of Hope open this way, the Wrath of God may be averted, or at leaſt greatly aſſwag'd and mitigated, or the time of its continuance ſhortned.*

4. *That when Judgments do fall heavieſt upon a People, yet by a due Preparation the burthen of them may be greatly lighten'd.* I ſhall ſpeak ſomething to each of theſe Obſervations, and then proceed to make ſome Application. And,

1. We may obſerve hence, *That it is the incorrigibleneſs of a People under former and leſſer Judg-*

Judgments, which cauſes Almighty God to ſend more and greater. It is very evident from the Text and Context that this was the Caſe with the People of the *Jews.* For their not returning to their Duty after ſo many Chaſtiſements is given as the Reaſon why God would proceed to a farther exerciſe of ſeverity. And it is not ſo much Gods indignation againſt ſin that cauſes him to do thus, as his Love to his People and deſire of their Reformation. For Affliction is found to be a very proper means in order to that End, and reduces thoſe many times to their Duty, whom forbearance and indulgence would but have ſpoil'd. And therefore this Diſcipline God chiefly exerciſes towards his own People, thoſe whom he has moſt favor'd with the knowledge of his Will, and that with an intent to bring them to a better mind by it. When there is no longer any hope of *that*, he then proceeds either to a total exciſion and deſtruction of ſuch a People, or elſe leaves them wholly to themſelves to follow the Conduct of their own Luſts, takes away the light from them, and lets them grope in darkneſs and blindneſs, till they ſo fill up the meaſure of their Iniquities, that in his wiſe Providence he judges it no longer fit to let them live upon the

the Earth, and ſo brings a ſweeping deſtruction upon them. In the mean while that Reformation is the end he ſeeks in chaſtizing, and that where there is no hope of *that*, he is wont to forbear, we may learn from that Expoſtulation of the Prophet *Eſay* with the *Jews*, for their ſtubbornneſs and backſlidings; *Why ſhould ye be ſtricken any more, ye will revolt more and more.* Elay 1. 5. And we have no reaſon to wonder that thoſe People whom God has favor'd in a peculiar manner ſhould be more eſpecially exercis'd with a ſevere Diſcipline when they ſin againſt the Mercy and Loving-kindneſs of God. Such have more to anſwer for, have more Talents entruſted with them; And we know 'tis uſual with men to take it more heinouſly when their own Children or Favorites, or ſuch as they have very much oblig'd, offend againſt them, then when 'tis done by others: And 'tis uſual alſo for them, ſo long as they have any hopes, to ſeek the reclaiming of ſuch by chaſtizing them. No wonder therefore if God proceeds in his dealing with men, according to the ſame Rules, and the ſame Principles of Reaſon which he himſelf has engrafted into our Nature. And hence it is that he tells this People of the *Jews* by his Prophet

in the *Chapter* before that where my Text is. *You onely have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore will I puniſh you for your iniquities.* Am. 3. 2.

And there are many places in the Prophets wherein we find this People highly tax'd, and even reproached for their ſtubbornneſs and incorrigibleneſs, notwithſtanding all the warnings God could give them. If you look into the Hiſtory of them, the 17. *Chap.* of the 2d. book of *Kings* will give you a ſad account of the Cauſes that mov'd God to give them over into the hands of their Enemies. At the 13. & 14. *verſes* of that *Chap.* you read, how that *the Lord teſtified againſt Iſrael and againſt Judah, by all the Prophets, and by all the Seers, ſaying, Turn ye from your evil ways and keep my Commandments and my Statutes, according to all the Law which I commanded your Fathers, and which I ſent to you by my ſervants the Prophets. Notwithſtanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, they did not believe in the Lord.* And if you look into the Writings of the Prophets, 'tis endleſs almoſt to reckon up the many ſeveral places wherein God upbraids this People, with their ſtubbornneſs, and hard-heartedneſs, and impudence in Sin. In the 48. of *Iſa.* at the 5. *I knew* (ſays he there) *that thou art obſtinate, and thy neck is an iron ſinew,*

ſinew, and thy brow braſs. And in the 6. of *Jer.* at the 10. *ver.* we have that Prophet complaining and expoſtulating to the ſame effect. *To whom ſhall I ſpeak and give warning that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcis'd, and they cannot hearken, behold the word of the Lord is unto them as a Reproach, they have no delight in it.* And when he gives them good Counſel at the 16. *ver.* of the ſame *Chap. Stand ye in the wayes and ſee and ask for the old paths, where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your Souls*; their anſwer is, (*but they ſaid*) *we will not walk therein.* And *we will not hearken, ver.* 17. Juſt as you have it in the 2d. *Chap.* of the ſame Prophecy at the 25. *ver.* where is a lively deſcription how they were bent and ſet upon their Idolatrous Practices, *With-hold thy foot from being unſhod, and thy throat from thirſt*, i.e. Forbear ſuch Practices as will certainly bring thee to Poverty and Miſery. It follows, *but thou ſaidſt, There is no hope, No, for I have loved other Gods, and after them will I go.* It was but loſt labour to diſſwade them. Like that deſperate Lover in the Comœdian, who ſays of himſelf, *Et prudens ſciens vivus videnſq; pereo nec quid agam ſcio.* He ſaw deſtruction and miſery before him but he could not refrain. This was a ſad caſe. But God we ſee was reſolv'd to

try yet farther with his People whether they might not be reclaim'd by the Rod. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee.* It was their ſtubbornneſs which made him take up this Reſolution. But I proceed to the 2d. Obſervation, which was

2. *That when God is thus reſolv'd; and Judgment is going forth againſt a People, they have then no other help or Remedy but a true Repentance.* Alaſs what other can they have? All other Remedies muſt ſuppoſe God either impotent or ignorant. But this only ſuppoſes him Merciful and Gracious, and that his Goodneſs can overcome his Indignation and Diſpleaſure when nothing elſe can. If we would ſeek to oppoſe our ſelves againſt the ſtrokes of his Anger, or to *meet* him in any other way, it muſt be upon a mad ſuppoſition that we are wiſer or ſtronger than he, But this only ſuppoſes that there is a certain force and efficacy in Repentance, and a kind of Magick in Prayers and Tears, which Almighty God himſelf, ſuch is his Goodneſs, cannot reſiſt. Too many indeed when they ſee Evils a-coming, are apt to put their whole Truſt in other Remedies, and to think that their own Strength or Policy ſhall be able to put by the ſtroke; and God may permit the ſucceſs ſometimes to anſwer their Expectation, being intreated perhaps by

by others that behave themſelves better. And this do's but harden them in a vain conceit that 'tis they themſelves and not the Providence of God that do's it. But moſt certainly whenever God ſets himſelf to puniſh or chaſtiſe a Nation, 'tis eaſie for him to bring it about, be they never ſo great, or ſtrong, or well provided, or watchful againſt their Enemies. And therefore whenſoever Judgments are threatned or Evil ſeems to be coming upon a Nation, though all fit and proper means and ways are to be vigorouſly us'd, whereby to ward off the Blow, yet if Repentance and Amendment of Life be not joyn'd with them, there is little hope in them all, they are but broken Reeds, that may eaſily ſink under us and deceive us. And the reaſon is becauſe God the Supream Orderer and Governour of all Affairs, finds no difficulty in overcoming any other oppoſition, except that of the humble Prayers and Supplications of a penitent People. And this brings me to the 3d. Obſervation that was made, *viz.*

3. *That though Judgments are never ſo peremptorily denounc'd, yet ſtill there is a door of Hope open this way.* For this is the ground of the Prophets Exhortation in the words of the Text, *Prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael*, viz. that thou may'ſt yet

turn

turn away his wrath from thee, and ſhorten at leaſt or mitigate, if not totally put by the Judgments that are going forth againſt thee. For to this purpoſe Rab. *David* gloſſes upon the words. *Præpara te & diſpone ut obviam eas & exeas in occurſum ejus per pœnitentiam, & bona opera, & experieris bonitatem & benignitatem ejus, convertetq; tibi mala in bona. Prepare and diſpoſe thy ſelf to go out and meet him, by Repentance and good Works; and then thou ſhalt experience his goodneſs and bounty to thee, and he will turn the threatned evil into good.* And for confirmation hereof, in the Chapter next after this you have a promiſe of mercy ſtill upon this condition that they would but ſeek the Lord with Penitent and humble Prayer. *Seek the Lord and ye ſhall live.* And this is moſt agreeable to the Declarations that God makes frequently in the Prophets concerning himſelf, and the manner of his dealing with men. *Fury is not in me*, ſays he, by the Prophet *Eſay*, *Iſa.* 27. 4. He is not implacable but may be appeas'd if men will uſe the means. And therefore in the following *ver.* he declares how that is to be done; *Or let him take hold of my ſtrength that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me.* As much as to ſay, If at any time I ſeem to be enrag'd againſt a ſinful People, yet let them but

uſe

uſe the right means, let them but apply themſelves to that which is the proper method to aſſwage my Anger, and they ſhall find the effect of it. He calls it a *taking hold of his Strength* (this applying themſelves to him by Humiliation and Prayer) becauſe it is the only thing that renders him in a manner unable to puniſh thoſe that do ſo; ſuch is his Goodneſs and Compaſſion toward returning Sinners, that he cannot find in his Heart to execute the fierceneſs of his wrath upon them; but finds himſelf in a manner diſabled, though it is not indeed from want of Power, but from want of Will that he forbears, or ceaſes to puniſh. He is not wont therefore to go to the utmoſt ſo long as there is any hope of a Peoples Amendment or Reformation; and ſo ſoon as that appears in any good degree, he begins to mitigate and withdraw his Judgments; according to that of the ſame Prophet *Eſay*, *In meaſure when it ſhooteth forth thou wilt debate with it; he ſtayeth his rough wind in the day of the Eaſt-wind*, *Iſa.* 27. 8. In the former part of which words God is compared to a Vine-dreſſer, that prunes his Vine with diſcretion, lopping off the ſuperfluous branches, but not hurting the body of the Tree. So God proportions his Chaſtiſements to the end which he deſigns

deſigns by them, which is indeed the good of his People, and therefore many times gives a check to his own Anger in the very middle, or ſtops when his hand was as it were lifted up to ſtrike, and the fatal blow was within a little of being given, not conſidering ſo much what a ſinful Nation has deſerv'd, as what is moſt agreeable to his Wiſdom and Goodneſs to do in the World. *He ſtayeth his rough wind in the day of his Eaſt-wind.* But I proceed to my 4th. and laſt Obſervation, of which but in a word.

4. *That where Judgments do fall heavieſt upon a People, yet by a due Preparation the burthen of them may be greatly lightned.* Sometimes, yea too often, the bulk or body of a People ſhew themſelves to be ſo ſtubborn and obſtinate in their Sins, that God is, as it were compell'd to exerciſe great ſeverities toward them. Yea many times they draw down Judgments upon themſelves by their wickedneſs. And their ſins are of ſuch a nature, that unleſs God would interpoſe by an extraordinary power to hinder it, they muſt needs bring National Calamities upon them. And ſometimes God has bin ſo far provok'd that he will hear of no interceſſion for them, but though *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job* ſtood before him, it would be to no purpoſe. Now in ſuch

Caſes

Caſes as theſe there is no Remedy but Judgment muſt have its courſe. Yet good men are not therefore left in a hopeleſs or miſerable Condition. They may *prepare to meet their God* going forth thus in Judgment againſt a People, and it will not only be a likely means to avert Gods Wrath in time, but it will alſo be a means to lighten the Burthen for the preſent, and enable them to bear it with Patience and Fortitude. For in a time of greateſt Calamities, if a man have but peace with God and his own Conſcience, it will be a mighty ſupport to him. And though a man ſhould be encompaſs'd with the ſaddeſt ſpectacles of miſery all about him, and ſee the ruin of his Country, and have a large ſhare in it himſelf, yet ſo long as he has hope in God, and peace in his own Boſom, provided that he has truly repented of his Sins, and fitted himſelf for the Happineſs of another World, ſuch a one, though he cannot but be under much grief and trouble, yet he ought not to be accounted miſerable. Every good man will have a tender and compaſſionate ſence of the Miſeries of others, eſpecially any that are near him, and 'tis Natural for all men to have ſence and feeling enough of thoſe temporal Evils which themſelves lye under. But ne-

vertheleſs a quiet Conſcience and a well-grounded hope in God are ſo ſtrong a Cordial, and have ſuch a mighty virtue in them as may be ſufficient to keep a mans Spirits from ſinking under his Burthen. It was that that ſupported holy *Job* under all thoſe grievous miſeries and calamities which befell both him and all his Family. And tho' a man have not all the ſame Conſcience of the Innocence and Integrity of his paſt life, that that good man had, yet if he be but truly penitent, and do really amend for the future, he may even be thankful for thoſe temporal Evils which were the occaſion of his ſo doing, and chearfully ſubmit to them, as but a juſt and neceſſary chaſtiſement.

But I proceed next to the ſecond part of my diſcourſe, to make ſome Application of what has bin ſaid. And every one of theſe Obſervations that have bin made from the words will afford us ſome inferences deſerving our Conſideration. For,

1. If Incorrigibleneſs be that which provokes God to ſend farther Judgments; then may we of this Nation have juſt cauſe to fear. For we cannot ſure but be ſenſible that we have already tryed Gods Patience very far. He has puniſh'd us in divers of the very ſame ways that

are

are here recounted in this Chapter, and which I repeated to you in the beginning of my Diſcourſe. Not indeed by Famine: but by Peſtilence, and by a dreadful Fire, ſo that the Remainders and the Inhabitants of this great City may juſtly be ſaid, in the Prophets Expreſſion, to have bin *as a fire-brand pluck'd out of the burning*, and as juſtly I doubt we may add that which follows, *yet have ye not return'd unto me, ſaith the Lord.* Since that time therefore we have fallen into many great troubles, through inteſtine Diviſions, and Animoſities between one Party and another, induſtriouſly cheriſh'd by thoſe who deſign'd the ruin of both: Many illegal and arbitrary things have bin done amongſt us for the bringing in thoſe two moſt dreadful Evils (which ever go hand in hand together) *Popery and Slavery.* And though our Suffering in this kind was comparatively but little, yet it carried a high degree of Terror in it, when we ſaw our ſelves in the hands of ſuch men as would ſtick at nothing to bring about their Ends, and whoſe very tender mercies were cruel; When we ſaw the Foundation laid and expected nothing leſs than the erection of a *French* Model of Religion and Government. And truly when we were at the heighth of

thoſe our Fears, I muſt needs ſay that then, if any, was the time when we began to look ſomewhat like a reforming People. For when we thought we were like ſhortly to be depriv'd of the Publick Worſhip of God in a known Tongue, People did ſeem a little more zealouſly to frequent it, when we ſaw and had occaſion to conſider more narrowly what the Doctrines and Principles of Popery were, we began a little more cloſely to adhere to thoſe of the Reformation, and when we thought that all Proteſtants muſt be like to ſuffer together, we began to lay aſide our quarrels and differences in a great meaſure, and promis'd our ſelves we ſhould not eaſily fall into the ſame again. And ſo merciful was God to us, that in a little time, when there was but this little Appearance and this good hope of a Reformation among us, he ſent us a moſt gracious and wonderful Deliverance, the very thing that we wiſh'd for, and beyond our Hopes. And is it not a ſad and an ill boding conſideration to us that no better fruit ſhould follow? May not God juſtly ſay to us as to *Ephraim* and *Judah* by the Prophet *Hoſea*, *O Ephraim what ſhall I do unto thee? O Judah what ſhall I do unto thee? For your goodneſs is as a morning Cloud, and as the early dew it goeth*

goeth away. Is it not ſtrange that men ſhould ſo ſoon forget what were their thoughts in the day of their Affliction? Is it not a wonderful thing that we ſhould diſagree and fall out again as much as ever, before we are got rid of the Common Enemy? And is it not a thing very provoking to Almighty God that we ſhould bring forth no better fruit, after ſuch warnings and ſo much mercy ſhew'd us? One would think the conſideration of thoſe dreadful Evils we have hitherto eſcap'd, ſhould make us look on our ſelves as under *ſome* obligation to walk worthy of the good Providence of God, and the proſpect of thoſe Miſeries that are before us, if our Enemies ſhould prevail, ſhould make us fearful of offending. He muſt be very blind, and I doubt wilfully ſo, that do's not ſee and believe that if the late deſigns, that had ſo long bin carried on againſt our Religion and Government had not met with that wonderful and ſeaſonable interruption that they did, not we only but even all the Chriſtians of the Reformation had in a little time, in all probability, bin reduc'd to as deplorable a Condition, as thoſe of *France* or *Savoy* have bin. And ſhall any little Creature now that has got ſome nice and fooliſh ſcruples concerning our preſent

ſettle-

ſettlement, and knows not what he would have himſelf, pretend to murmur and repine becauſe God do's not bring about his work juſt in the way that he would have it, and according to the model of his Fancy? Is it nothing to ſuch narrow ſouls that the whole Proteſtant intereſt which was in a manner expiring, is now thro' Gods wonderful Providence beginning to revive again, that the moſt ancient of all Proteſtant Churches, the poor Inhabitants of the valleys of *Piedmont*, that have born their Teſtimony thro' ſo many Ages, are already reſtor'd to the liberty of their Religion, and become a Terror to him that ſtirr'd up Perſecution againſt them, and that there is hope the like may ere long befall our poor Brethren of *France*? Or do all theſe people deſerve no conſideration? Is it no matter what becomes of them? ſince that perhaps in all things they may not be juſt of our minds. So ſome Bigots ſeem to think who would cut themſelves off from the Body of the Reformation. But certainly till we are reduc'd to a better temper of Mind, till we can love one another, and have a hearty Charity for all that hold the ſame Fundamentals of Chriſtianity, tho' differing from us in leſſer matters, provided they live but according

to

to their profeſſion, and till we our ſelves learn to walk as becomes the Goſpel, and to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour by a holy and exemplary Converſation, till this be done, we are not fit for a compleat Deliverance; And 'tis no wonder therefore if God ſtill continue to chaſtiſe us; If after he has brought us out of *Ægypt*, he yet lead us about in the Wilderneſs, and cauſe us like the murmuring *Iſraelites* to conſume our dayes in Vanity and our years in Trouble. Yea if he ſhould make us to drink up the dregs of that bitter Cup which has already gone about in almoſt all the Reformed Churches round about us, we muſt acknowledge the Juſtice of his Providence in it; yea we ought to wonder at his Mercy if we eſcape it. But,

2. From the 2d Obſervation that was made we may draw this Inference. That ſince when Judgment is going forth, and God is about to chaſtiſe a people, nothing elſe can deliver them but Repentance; We, who by reaſon of our former Impenitency and Wickedneſs have ſo much cauſe to expect ſeverity, and who according to the preſent poſture of our Affairs ſeem to be upon the brink either of a happy Deliverance or a miſerable Downfall, ought to beware that

we

we put not our Truſt and Confidence in any other help or means ſo much as that. Many of us I doubt are too apt with the *Jews* to put their truſt in Arm of Fleſh, to reaſon from ſecond Cauſes and Appearances without conſidering ſufficiently how eaſily the Providence of God, if he be angry with us, and ſet himſelf againſt us, can blaſt and defeat all our likelieſt and moſt probable Hopes. We may be apt to reckon upon the ſtrength of our Forces, the number of our Confederates, the Valour of our King, the Situation of our Country and the like; but not only a little ſence of Religion, and a ſmall conſideration of the over-ruling Providence of God, but even our own freſh experience may ſerve to convince us, that except we have him on our ſide nothing elſe can do us any good. For have we not lately bin forc'd to turn our backs upon our Enemies in that very Element wherein we were wont to think our greateſt ſtrength lay? And though God has bin pleas'd to bleſs us with better Succeſs in *Ireland* (for which for ever praiſed be his Name) yet in the very manner of doing it he has ſhew'd us how eaſily he could have brought about a quite contrary event, and given us ſuch a blow as was not to have bin recovered. We may even trem-

tremble to think how near we were to ruine, when the Breath of our Noſtrils, the Anointed of the Lord, ſo narrowly eſcap'd that fatal Bullet, and how diſmal the conſequence muſt in all probability have bin not to us only but to all the *Proteſtant Churches* abroad had he fallen by it. But *if God be for us who can be againſt us?* If he will undertake the defence and protection of any man, all the World cannot hurt him, though he walk in the midſt of dangers, it is the ſame thing; *A thouſand may fall beſide him, and ten thouſand at his right hand, but it ſhall not come nigh him*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of him whom God protects. It is good for us therefore to make our peace with God, and to put our Truſt in him; To ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *I will not Truſt in my Bow, neither is it my ſword that ſhall help me. But it is thou, O God, who*, we hope, *wilt ſave us from our Enemies, and put them to confuſion that hate us.* All neceſſary and proper means indeed are to be diligently and vigorouſly us'd; For God will not help thoſe that take no care to help themſelves, when he has put into their hands the power and means of doing it; And we ſee St. *Paul* tho' he was before hand aſſur'd of the Event, being told by an Angel that God had given him all them that ſail'd with him,

Acts 27. 24. yet was careful nevertheleſs not to omit the neceſſary means of Preſervation. But when all is done, our main Confidence muſt be, not in any force or ſtrength of our own, but in the merciful Providence of God, who is always able, and never unwilling to deliver us if we are but duly prepar'd for it. To which purpoſe therefore the Inference that I make from my 3d Obſervation is this;

3. That ſince God is ſo gracious, that tho' Judgments be never ſo peremptorily denounc'd or ſeem never ſo likely to come upon a people, yet there is always a door of hope open to the Penitent. We ſhould therefore magnifie his Goodneſs, and ſet our ſelves ſeriouſly to uſe the means of averting his Anger. It is that which is the end that God deſigns in chaſtizing a Nation, even to bring it to Repentance, and if the Threatning, and the Terror of his Judgments before they come, will but have that Effect, it will pleaſe him far better than if we force him to exerciſe ſeverity firſt, and he will be glad to be excus'd from that his *ſtrange work*, which he has ſo often declar'd he do's not delight in.

Almighty God ſeems now by his Providence to be doing great things in the World for the good

good of his Church, and the bringing down it's moſt cruel and implacable Enemies. He can, and we ſee do's, make uſe of thoſe who are no Friends to his Truth to bring about thoſe good Ends which his Wiſdom has deſign'd; And if we will ſet our ſelves to obſtruct a nd hinder the good Work that he is doing, we may bring on our ſelves a great deal of Trouble and involve our ſelves in much Miſery; But his work will be done, his Counſel that *ſhall* ſtand, and the oppoſition of fooliſh and wicked men ſhall but help to promote and eſtabliſh it. How much better therefore were it for us, to reconcile our ſelves to him by a hearty Repentance, and become the willing Inſtruments of advancing his Glory.

There are ſome great and crying ſins amongſt us, which every one ought in his place, and thoſe eſpecially who are entruſted with Power, to ſet themſelves againſt. We cannot be ignorant to what a heighth Vice and Debauchery has grown amongſt us, having bin I doubt purpoſely cheriſh'd, in order to the preparing us for a falſe Religion. It concerns us therefore not only to reform our ſelves if we have bin infected with the too general Contagion, but to ſet our ſelves what in us lies to oppoſe the Torrent of Vice and Licentiouſneſs, to declare openly our diſlike of it, and to ſhew it no manner of Favour or Countenance. It ought to be a ſufficient Barr to any mans Advancement whatever he be otherwiſe, if he be known to be vitious and immoral in his Life. For we may eaſily ſee the Folly of truſting any

thing in the hands of ſuch Perſons as have not the fear of God before their Eyes. Neither ought we to fear (as ſome ſeem to have done) that this will be the way to promote Hypocriſie; For admitting that it were ſo, yet it is a thouſand times better, and more for the benefit of the World that Men ſhould have but an outſide and appearance of Godlineſs, than be openly profane and Irreligious. And beſides, if it be once for a mans advantage and Reputation generally in the World that he appear ſober and pious in his demeanor, no queſtion but many more will be really and truly ſo, than would be otherwiſe where Vice is become faſhionable.

We ſhould conſider how our Vices and Immoralities have brought us within a little of utter deſtruction. And therefore if ever we hope for better times, 'tis abſolutely neceſſary that we amend. If we have bin ſeduc'd and led aſtray by ill Example, or carried down with the Torrent of Looſeneſs and Licentiouſneſs that has broke in amongſt us, 'tis high time now at laſt to conſider of it, and accept the Invitation that God gives us to become better. 'Tis time for every man to begin a Reformation of himſelf and his Family, and all as far as he has Influence, and therein to follow the Conduct and advance the Work of that Good Providence which ſeems now to be vindicating the oppreſs'd Cauſe of True Religion, and which, though we have highly deſerv'd Gods Anger, yet has open'd a way to us to become yet a very happy, if we will but be a reform'd People.

And

And I inſiſt the more on this becauſe I verily believe that were mens Vices and Debaucheries well cur'd, it would prove a great healing of all our Diviſions and Differences; it being but too notorious that many leek to encreaſe and ſet forward theſe, not ſo much for any real concern they have at the bottom for one ſide of the queſtion or the other, as for fear that if we ſhould agree there would in time be a more ſtrict Rein of Diſcipline laid upon their Necks, and they ſhould not be ſuffered to be ſo openly Prophane and Licentious. This makes too many liſt themſelves in that Party which they think will give leaſt reſtraint to their beloved Vices, who in the mean time little concern themſelves which ſide has the Truth, or ſo much as where the real difference lies. But certainly it ſeems a very plain caſe, that 'tis the Duty of every Chriſtian, *as* to live according to the certain and unconteſted Rules of Piety and Virtue, *ſo* to joyn himſelf in the worſhipping of God with thoſe who have the Advantage of a Publick and Legal Eſtabliſhment, ſo far as he may do it without Sin. And if but ſo much as this were well conſidered and conſcientiouſly put in Practice, it were enough to make us a very happy Nation, and to Cure many of our worſt Diſtempers.

Such Admonitions as theſe if we would be perſwaded to take, we need not at all queſtion the good Effects of it. But if after all that God has done for us (by his Providence in a way of Chaſtiſement *or* in a way of Mercy), there ſtill appear no amendment among us, as we

we ſhall highly deſerve, ſo I know no Reaſon but we ſhould expect, to fall under ſevere Judgments. And tho' God may give us that ſucceſs at preſent which he ſees neceſſary to the carrying on other ends of his Providence in the World, yet we may aſſure our ſelves of this, that he can never want means to puniſh us. And though we were totally deliver'd out of all the dangers that at preſent ſeem to ſurround us, yet more and greater Evils may ſtill ariſe, and are like to do ſo, ſo long as Wickedneſs ſhall continue uncontrol'd, and our Lives unreform'd.

If too general an Impenitence ſhall ſtill prevent our happineſs (which God forbid) and provoke him to exerciſe ſeverity toward us, there is yet this Comfort to every particular Perſon, that will but be faithful in doing his Duty, that by a due Preparation to meet the Evil, the Burthen of it may be greatly lightned, which was the 4th. Obſervation drawn from the words, and from it I ſhall only make this my laſt Inference, and ſo conclude, *viz.*

4. *That whatever evil may come upon us, it is our greateſt Wiſdom not to be taken unprepar'd.* We ſee what Miſery ſome would bring upon us. For we have too great cauſe to ſuſpect there are thoſe among us that car'd not tho' they ventur'd the ſubjecting this whole Nation to a forreign Yoke of moſt miſerable Slavery, ſo they might but have their Ends for the preſent. And we are confidently told what I am very loth to believe, and am reſolv'd

ſolv'd I will not believe till I ſee it evidently prov'd, that there are ſome who call themſelves *Proteſtants*, who yet ſtick not in a moſt lewd and flattering Addreſs to invite the Common Enemy of their Religion and Liberty to reſcue them from what they call a cruel Uſurpation. But I cannot perſwade my ſelf that ſo *great* a Wickedneſs ſhould enter into the Hearts of any number of Men that go under that Character. And if it did, I ſhould think that in the next place they would apply themſelves to the great Enemy of Mankind to free them from the Tyranny of God Almighty. But we have ſeen alſo that which gives us far more juſt cauſe to apprehend our ſelves in danger; That our manifold Provocations and great incorrigibleneſs that has hitherto appear'd may very juſtly expoſe us to heavy Sufferings. A general Repentance and Reformation would no doubt prevent any ſuch thing; Yea the great Mercy that God has ſo lately ſhew'd us, is a manifeſt indication that he is not willing to deal with us as we have deſerv'd. But ſince we cannot promiſe our ſelves any ſecurity, 'tis our wiſeſt-way to prepare for the worſt. It will not be loſt labour though it never come. We are never ſo fit for a proſperous condition as when we are ready if God call us to it to ſubmit to an adverſe, and can heartily pray that his Will may be done. If we have Peace in our own Conſciences, and Peace with God, we are then ready to meet him in any of the Varieties of his Providence; and may ſay with the Prophet *Habakkuk*, *Although the Figtree*

ſhall

ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the Vines, tho' the labour of the Olive ſhall fail and the fields ſhall yield no meat, though the flocks ſhall be cut off from the fold, and there ſhall be no herd in the ſtalls, yet we will rejoyce in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our ſalvation, Hab. 3. 17, 18. But till we be reconcil'd to God, and have Peace with him, 'tis impoſſible we ſhould be ever ſafe in any times amidſt the manifold Viciſſitudes of this Life. Let us labour therefore to obtain this Peace by a true Repentance and forſaking all our paſt ſins, and by bringing forth fruits meet for Repentance; by Univerſal Righteouſneſs and Holineſs of Life, and more particularly at this time, by Charity and Almſgiving to ſuch as are in need, which is a Sacrifice alwayes acceptable and well-pleaſing to God, and then eſpeciallymoſt proper when we would appeaſe his Anger, or implore his Bleſſing, or render our thanks to him for his great Mercy and Goodneſs to us; All which we have now occaſion to do. I conclude therefore with thoſe words of the *Pſalmiſt* which are a great Encouragement to Liberality and Bounty to the Poor, eſpecially in times when men are apprehenſive of any Danger. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of Trouble, The Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive that he may be bleſſed upon the Earth, and will not deliver him to the Will of his Enemies.*

Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, which hath loved us and hath given us Everlaſting Conſolation and good Hope through Grace, Comfort your Hearts and ſtabliſh you in every good Word and Work. To him be Glory for ever and ever.

FINIS.